

Whoops

Story: Whoops

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Summary: You'd think defeat would taste bitter, but you'd be wrong.

***Chapter 1*: Whoops**

Whoops

It's not that far. The edge of the sandbar is only a few meters away, and the handle of the axe is even closer than that. If he stretches, he can probably reach it without too much trouble. The problem is going to be keeping a good grip on the thick rope. As long as he doesn't let go, it should all work out. He steadies the soles of his boots on the salt-caked hull and reaches as far as he can. So close... His fingertips brush the rusted handle and he can taste victory (for those interested, victory tastes exactly like everything else does at sea – salty).

Okay, Felix thinks. Alright. This is alright. This is gonna work.

He's wrong, of course.

At the sound of the resulting splash, Jenna peers over the edge of the rail. "Find anything?" she asks dispassionately.

Felix doesn't hear her, because he's too busy trying to keep from drowning and simultaneously keep from losing his sword to the depths. He can multitask, but even for the best of multitaskers there is a limit. Felix has found his. Finally surfacing with a gasp, he spits out a disconcerting amount of water and proceeds to cough rather painfully.

Jenna tuts and rolls her eyes. "What have I told you about trying to swim with your gear?" she scolds him. "Honestly. *Boys.*"

Her brother is preoccupied with his wild lunges towards the rope ladder and does not deign to respond. When he

manages to grab hold and hoist himself halfway out of the sea, he coughs one last time and glares up at her. "I wasn't trying to *swim*," he says coldly, though whatever intimidation he is attempting to instigate is hindered by his newfound resemblance to a drowned rat. "There's an axe down there, and I was *trying* to get it."

The look his sister sends him is positively *withering*. "I know that," she says in a voice dripping with condescension. "I'm not *stupid*. What I'm curious about is why you thought it would be a good idea to try and reach in while wearing a sword on your belt. And a cloak. *Idiot*." There is a moment of silence wherein the sopping wet boy at the foot of the ladder sputters and tries frantically to think up a reasonable (and hopefully snappy) response to this that doesn't make him sound profoundly unintelligent.

The moment passes and so does the chance at redemption.

Jenna disappears back from the rail, muttering something that sounds suspiciously like "That's what I thought."

Under the sweltering heat of the midday sun, Felix's top half is already beginning to dry. The moisture evaporates and leaves stiff hair and clothes as a parting gift. A slew of unpleasant words escape from between Felix's gritted teeth. This is what he has been trying to avoid, of course. Clothes that have come into contact with the brackish water of the Eastern Sea are a bitch to wear afterwards, and Piers always refuses to rinse them out with clean water after, saying something about Felix having brought it on himself.

Grumbling will get him nowhere. He's already all salty, so there's no longer any reason to stay out of the water, but Jenna is ... *ugh* ... Jenna is *right* in that it wasn't very smart to bring his heavy gear with him. Fine.

After dropping off his sword, cloak, boots, belt, shirt, and – god, what had he been *thinking* before? – shield on the deck, Felix plunges back into the water, retrieves the rusted axe, and calls it a day.

All in all, he supposes it could have been worse. It's just a bit of briny water, right? And, sure, Felix is a proud guy, but he's good-natured enough to handle a few hours (*a solid week*) of teasing from his sister and companions, right? And, okay, so moving around in his ruined clothing is unpleasant for a while, but Piers takes pity eventually, so it's not so bad, right?

At least he got a sweet axe out of the deal... right?

"We-ell," Sunshine the blacksmith drawls, squinting at his own handiwork. "S'not the best thing I ever forged... N'fact it's kinda shoddy..." He peers at the sword on Felix's belt. "You're prob'ly better off keepin' the one you got there..."

Felix twitches in his newly soft and clean clothing. Sunshine sticks out a lazy hand and stares purposefully at the pouch of coins hanging beside the sword. "M'still gonna have to ask you t'pay up... That'll be seven thousand coins, if y'please..."

Felix tastes defeat.

You'd think it would taste bitter, but you'd be wrong. Defeat tastes strangely like victory does – salty.

A/N: Gosh but it's been awhile. Hi. Just for the record, I don't really think Felix is stupid. I just like trying to figure out just how they manage to snag rusted weapons out of shallows in the sea. Probably not like this. Sooo, for the purposes of me

wanting Felix to look dumb for 800 words, I passed him the Idiot Ball for a round or two.

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